

Windmill presents Hamlet comedy

BY JESSICA PATTERSON
TIMES REPORTER

High River audiences will be delighted with clever comedy *I Hate Hamlet*, Windmill Theatre's latest production.

The play begins with young actor Andrew Rally, played by John Bertwistle, who has just made it big, moving into former actor John Barrymore's New York apartment.

Rally meets Barrymore's ghost, who offers him guidance about his next big role — playing Hamlet on the stage, or making easy money in another television series.

Barrymore is played by Steve Penman. The character Felicia Dauntine, Rally's greedy realtor, is played by Nina Cameron. Gina Orr plays Rally's Hollywood agent, Lillian Troy. Rally's girlfriend, Deirdre McDavey, is played by Dara Murphy. The character Gary is played by Paul Rancourt.

"It's a funny play," said director Greg Smyth. "It's

got a lot of fast-paced comedy, action and it's good dinner theatre fare."

Barrymore coaches Rally through a crash course in acting and love, including a swashbuckling sword fight, choreographed by former High River resident and current Edmonton actress Brenna Corner.

"She was behind the scenes," Smyth said. "She came down to choreograph the sword fight between Barrymore and Andrew, and it's really well done. She did a great job."

The rehearsals for *I Hate Hamlet* began in January and have been going strong at the library twice a week.

"We're about two-thirds of the way through rehearsals," Smyth said.

The players will be moving back into the Memorial Centre at the end of the month.

I Hate Hamlet begins April 17 at the Memorial Centre. The productions run from April 17 to 20, and from April 24 to 26.

Tickets are on sale at Pekisko Clothing and through Celia Penman at 652-7913.

H.R. Times - Mar 25/08



COMMUNITY

I Hate Hamlet
by Paul Rudnick

DINNER THEATRE

Windmill's latest production is 'a funny play.'

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COMMUNITY

TAKE A BOW

Windmill Theatre ready to present *I Hate Hamlet*.

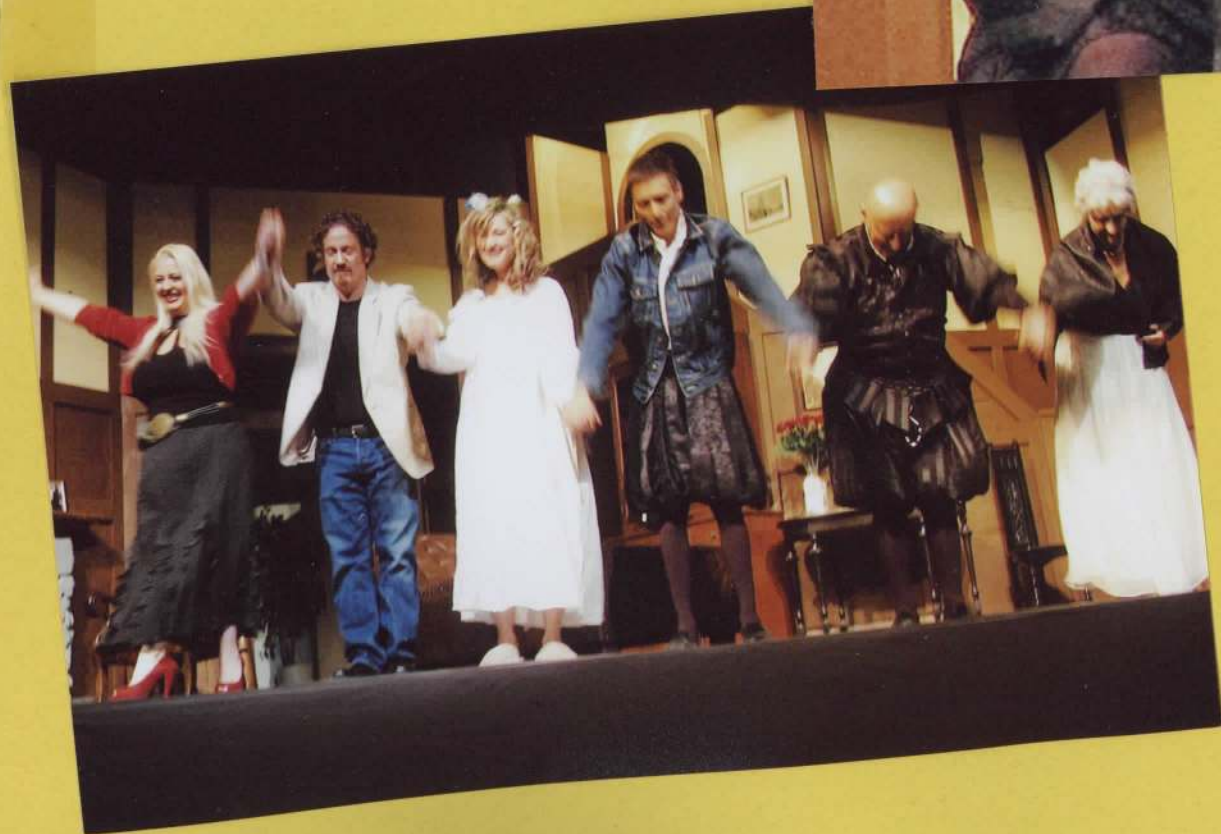
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COMMUNITY • HIGH RIVER TIMES • Tuesday, April 15, 2008 **19**

It's showtime

I HATE HAMLET — The cast of *I Hate Hamlet* rehearses for this month's Windmill Theatre Players production at the Highwood Memorial Centre in High River. Steve Penman (in black) plays the role of John Barrymore, while John Bertwistle plays Andrew, a young actor who has just earned fame on a TV show. Dara Murphy plays Deidre. Dinner theatre begins with shows Friday and Saturday nights. There's a regular-theatre Sunday matinee at 1:30 p.m. For tickets, call 652-7913.

Photos by Sandra Wiebe





ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Windmill Theatre sets stage for fall production

SUBMITTED BY WINDMILL THEATRE PLAYERS

Windmill Theatre Players, High River's live theatre group, is pleased to announce the fall production of *The Music Man* by Meredith Willson.

This classic musical has enjoyed success on stage and screen, with the 1957 production on Broadway garnering five Tony Awards, including Best Musical and Best Actor (Robert Preston).

The 1958 original-cast recording won a Grammy Award. The 1962 movie version, starring Robert Preston, as well as ongoing productions in both amateur and professional theatre, have helped keep the musical alive and well since it was first launched.

Witty dialogue and a wonderful musical score make this a sure-fire crowd-pleaser for all ages. The story follows a fast-talking travelling salesman, Harold Hill, as he cons the people of River City, Iowa, into buying instruments and uniforms for a boys' band he vows to organize.

His plans to skip town with the cash are foiled when he falls for Marian the Librarian. This engaging and timeless story will be brought to life on stage at the newly refurbished Highwood Memorial Centre in High River this November, with a talented and enthusiastic cast of Windmill players. Windmill Theatre Players was organized in 1974 by a group of individuals who wanted to see and be a part of the live theatre experience.

The first play presented was *The Matchmaker* in the fall of 1974. Since that

time, Windmill Theatre has performed two major shows per year, many, many one-act plays, as well as youth and children's theatre.

In 1976, Windmill members presented their first musical, excerpts from *My Fair Lady*. Musicals have become a favourite for performers and audiences alike, with such shows as *The Music Man*, *Oklahoma*, *The King & I*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* playing to full houses almost every performance.

Windmill Theatre Players has had performers from all over: Calgary, High River, Okotoks, Black Diamond Cayley, Nanton, Claresholm and Vulcan.

People from all walks of life and all ages, from children as young as four years old to young-at-heart people much older, have, at one time or another, been on the Memorial Centre stage as part of a Windmill show. Windmill Theatre Players will be celebrating its 35th anniversary in 2009 and we want to celebrate in style July 4.

We would like to invite anyone who has been a part of any Windmill production over the past 35 years to come and celebrate with us, but unfortunately, we have lost touch with a lot of them, so we need your help. If you or someone you know has ever been involved in a Windmill show, be it on stage or behind the scenes, please contact us, or contact them and have them contact us, so that we can compile our mailing list. Contact Celia at 403-652-7913, or e-mail wtp@shaw.ca, and mark your calendars for July 4.

Dinner theatre performances of *The Music Man* are Nov. 20, 21, 22 and 27. Tickets are \$40 per person and can be purchased through the contact information listed above. Regular theatre matinee performance is Sunday, Nov. 23. All tickets are \$12 each. Regular theatre evening performances are Nov. 28 and 29. The cost is \$15 for adults and \$12 for students and seniors. Regular theatre tickets are available for purchase at Pekisko Men's Clothing at 403-652-2252.



35 Windmill Theatre Players Present:

Meredith Willson's *The Music Man*

Dinner Theatre

Nov. 20, 21, 22 & 27, 2008

All tickets: \$40.00

Doors open at 6:00pm, Curtain 8:00pm

For Dinner Theatre Tickets:

Celia, 403.652.7913 wtp@shaw.ca

Regular Theatre

Sunday Matinee: Nov. 23, 2008

All tickets: \$12.00

Doors open at 1:30pm, Curtain 2:00pm

Evening: Nov. 28 & 29, 2008

Adults \$15.00, Students & Seniors \$12.00

Doors open at 7:30pm, Curtain 8:00pm

For Regular Theatre Tickets:

Pekisko Men's Clothing,
403.652.2252

All performances at the
Highwood Memorial Centre, High Riv
www.windmilltheatreplayers.co

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It's show time for *Music Man*

■ Windmill musical begins this week

BY ALYSSA BURNHAM
TIMES REPORTER

There are only a few short days before the curtain rises on the Windmill Theatre Players' fall production of *The Music Man*, but there's no need for panic.

The cast has been rehearsing three times a week since the beginning of September, and co-director Karen King said they are "absolutely" ready to

take the stage on opening night this Thursday.

"This cast has been phenomenal," King said. "They've just been so much fun to work with (and) fun to be around."

The 38-member cast ranges in age from 10 to 70-some years. Most are from High River, but there are also actors and actresses from Calgary, Okotoks and Vulcan.

All of the cast members have been in previous Windmill Theatre Players productions, except 13-year old Tayte Mitchell, who plays resident bad boy Tommy.

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Photo by Alyssa Burnham

Charlotte Bouck (left), Nancy Barton and Dorian Goodwin put the finishing touches on the Windmill Theatre Players set pieces for *The Music Man* last Sunday afternoon.

H.R. TIMES


OCT. 21, 2008

H.R. Times ~ Nov 18, 08



Windmill Theatre Players
present

Meredith Willson's



The Music Man

November 20 - November 29, 2008
Highwood Memorial Centre, High River



Photo by Alyssa Burnham

Laura Ferguson (singing), Helen Klassen (keyboard) and Jan Darrah (piano) rehearse until the song sounds just right in preparation for this Thursday's opening night of the Windmill Theatre Players' fall production of *The Music Man*. The musical continues this weekend and next at the Highwood Memorial Centre.

Music Man features 'fun'

Continued from Page 1

"He's great — quite an accomplished little singer and actor," King said of Mitchell.

This isn't the first time Windmill Theatre Players have performed the award-winning 1957 musical.

In 1985, High River's live theatre group brought to life, for the first time, the story of a smooth-talking salesman named Harold Hill who tries to con the residents of River City, Iowa, into buying instruments and uniforms for a band he promises to create, even though he has no musical experience.

Twenty-three years later, the witty script and musical score remain the same, as do a handful of the performers.

King said there are at least four members of the cast that were part of the 1985 production, as well. "They were playing different roles, but they were in it."

Celia Penman, a member of Windmill Theatre Players for 25 years, played Elma Hicks in 1985, and is back with a slightly larger role as Mrs. Paroo this time around.

"It's amazing how many lines come back to you," Penman said. "Being on stage is so fun because you get to have the audience's reaction."

Between now and Thursday, it's just a matter of putting the finishing touches on costumes, set design and minor details, Penman said.

The cast, directors and everyone else involved in *The Music Man* are excited to show audiences what many hours of hard work have produced.

"They are having fun," King said. "And, if they're having fun, the audience will have fun. That's the key to amateur theatre."

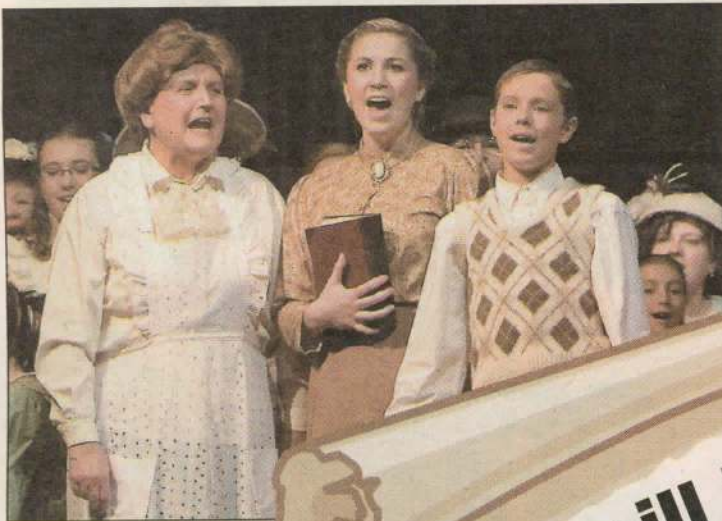
All performances will take place at the newly refurbished Highwood Memorial Centre.

Tickets for dinner theatre performances this Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and Nov. 27, cost \$40 and can be purchased by calling Penman at 652-7913.

Tickets for regular theatre performances on Nov. 28 and 29 cost \$15 for adults and \$12 for youths and seniors, and \$12 for a matinee performance this Sunday. All regular theatre tickets can be purchased through Pekisko Men's clothing at 652-2252.



COMMUNITY



Marian Paroo (Alyshia Hobday) stands front and centre with mother Mrs. Paroo (Celia Penman) and brother Winthrop (Braedan Pettigrew).



Eulalie MacKecknie Shinn (Bonnie Duffell) gets taken in by the Music Man's fast-talkin' sales pitch.

Windmill Theatre Players score another musical hit

REVIEW

■ The Music Man on High River stage

BY AARON CARR
TIMES REPORTER

The Music Man rolled into town at the Highwood Memorial Centre last Thursday night when the Windmill Theatre Players brought the hit 1957 Broadway musical to High River.

I had a chance to catch the show opening night, and the Windmill troop didn't disappoint.

The play centres on a travelling con man who calls himself Professor Harold Hill. The swindle involves convincing townspeople that he intends to start a marching band. But, after Hill collects the money for instrument and uniform pre-orders, he hops on a train to the next town.

When Hill comes to small-town River City, Iowa, to work his scam, however, he gets more than he bargained for. The prim and proper town librarian, Marian Paroo, sees through his con, but when Hill helps her younger brother, Marion, begin to fall in love with her, Hill has to risk being found-out in order to win her over.

For a community theatre group, what the Windmill Theatre Players were able to pull off with its production of *The Music Man* is nothing short of spectacular. The cast of about 40 players performed every scene with flair, dance routines, huge laughs and catchy choruses kept the near-full house dinner-theatre crowd laughing and clapping throughout.

The principle actors were spot-on in their performances. Jim Goodwin was pitch perfect in the lead as Harold Hill, the fast-talkin', slick and slippery con artist, and Alyshia

Hobday lit up the stage as leading lady Marian Paroo.

Aside from a personal pet peeve of leading men wooing women young enough to be their daughters, the casting couldn't have been better. Other standouts include Herb Haekel as Mayor Shin, Hill's primary foil, Bonnie Duffell as the mayor's wife, Eulalie, and the school board turned barbershop quartet of Ron Schmidt, Josh Bertwistle, George Stone and Ray Fox.

The Windmill Theatre Players outdid themselves in the area of costume and set design. From the men's suits to the women's dresses to the townspeople's duds, every costume looked like it was plucked right out of an early 1900s department store. The inspired set design completed the effect, creating a polished product to equal a professional production.

Although just about every aspect of the production screamed of attention to detail and showed off a polished sheen, there were some minor hiccups. The play hinges on huge, elaborate song and dance routines that recall the heyday of Broadway theatre, but with so many actors filling up every square foot of space on stage, there were a few awkward moments in stage direction. And though, for the most part, the acting performances were top notch, there were a few missteps.

But none of those minor drawbacks was enough to distract from the overall enjoyment of the show. In the end, *The Music Man* is all about fun, and the Windmill Theatre Players nailed it. Each member of the production was so clearly enjoying him or herself that it spilled over into the audience. Do yourself a favour if you haven't already and get out to see *The Music Man* at the Memorial Centre while you still can.

There are three shows left, this Thursday, Friday and Saturday. For tickets, call 403-652-2252.



A group of travelling salesmen seated in the same train car get into a heated discussion about a notorious con artist who poses as a salesman.

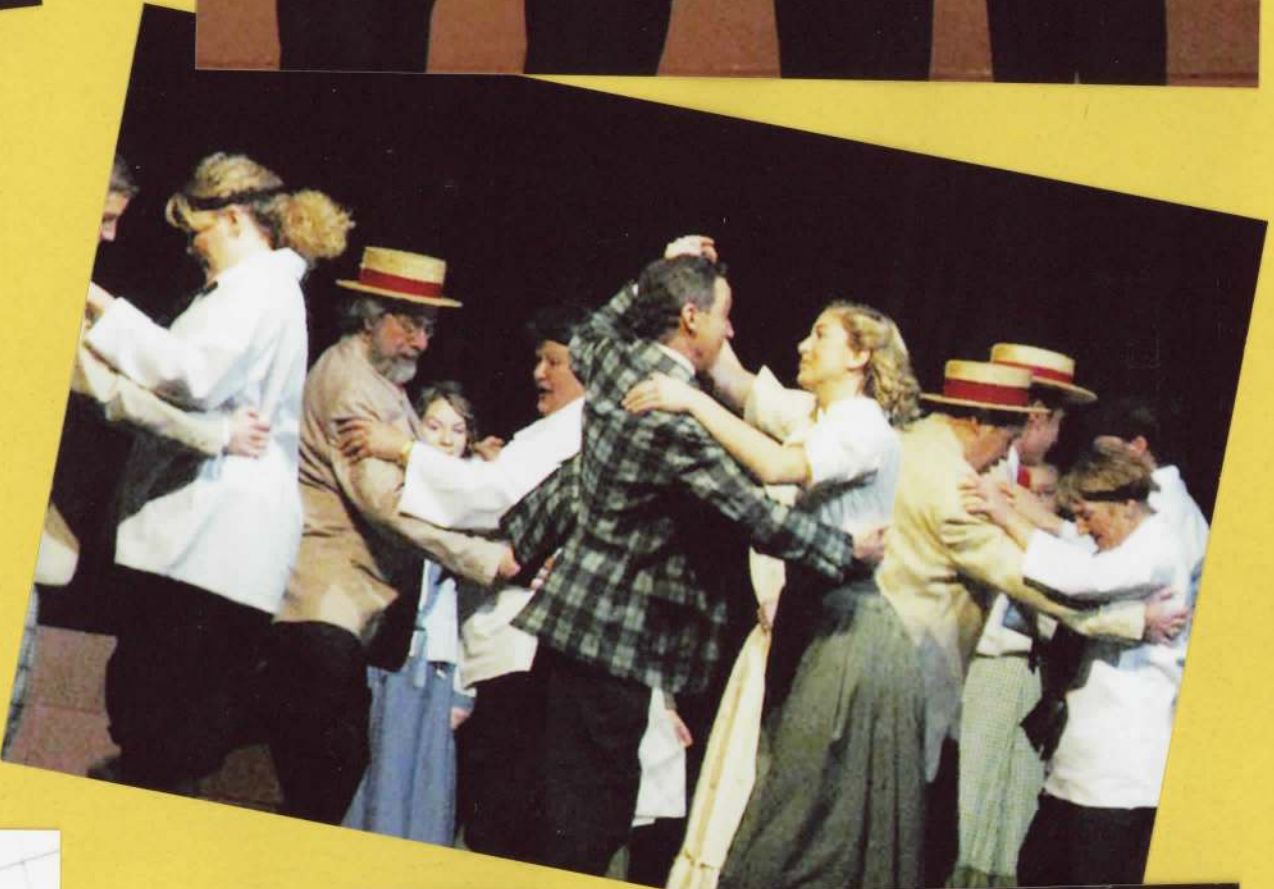


The Music Man, Professor Harold Hill (played by Jim Goodwin), runs into his old friend, Marcellus (Dorian Goodwin), shortly after getting off the train in River City, Iowa.

Harold Hill convinces the residents of River City, Iowa, to start a marching band in an extravagant song-and-dance routine.







Windmill Theatre holds auditions

■ *Ten parts available for comedy production*

BY ALYSSA BURNHAM
TIMES REPORTER

Windmill Theatre Players is looking for a few good women and one good man for its spring production of *Stepping Out*.

Auditions for the play, a 1984 comedy by Richard Harris, take place at the Highwood Memorial Centre in High River at 2 p.m. Sunday and 7 p.m. Monday.

Parts are available for nine women and one man.

"One of the reasons that I chose this play is that there are 10 meaty parts," said director Steve Penman. "It's very much an ensemble show."

Stepping Out follows a group of dancers as they attend weekly evening dance classes in a dingy church hall and struggle to prepare for a charity dance performance.

Penman said he's looking for a wide age range of actors, and only basic dance skills are required, because a lot of time will be

devoted to dance instruction during rehearsals.

Auditions will involve both dancing and acting components.

Penman said those who audition will be taught a tap-dance sequence by choreographer Erica Harding of Alberta Dance Academy in Okotoks, and will then be asked to perform in a group.

The acting component will consist of cold reads and short scenes.

Penman said there's no need for those who audition to prepare anything in advance, but they "should be ready to move ... and ready to play around with some scenes."

After the 10-person cast is chosen, rehearsals will take place on Sunday afternoons and Monday and Wednesday evenings.

The production dates are March 26-29 and April 2-4.

"We're always looking for new people," Penman said. "If anyone has not done it, but is contemplating it, they should definitely come out."

For more information, contact Steve Penman at 403-652-7913 or 403-461-4165.

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Windmill holds auditions



Photos by Alyssa Burnham

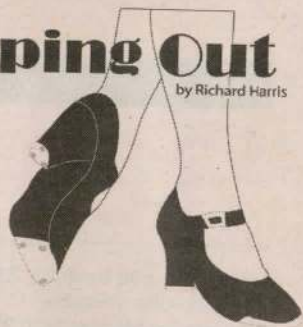
About a dozen hopefuls came out to the Highwood Memorial Centre on Sunday afternoon to audition for the Windmill Theatre Players' production of "Stepping Out." Auditions were also held on Monday evening. Production dates are March 26 to 29 and April 2 to 4.

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35 Windmill Theatre Players presents

Stepping Out
by Richard Harris



Dinner Theatre

March 27 & 28 and Apr. 2 & 3, 2009
Adults: \$40.00 Children 14 and under: \$30.00
Doors open at 6:00pm, Curtain 8:00pm

Regular Theatre

Sunday Matinee: Mar. 29, 2009
All tickets: \$12.00
Doors open at 1:30pm, Curtain 2:00pm

Evening Performance: Apr. 4, 2009
Adults \$15.00, Students & Seniors \$12.00
Doors open at 7:30pm, Curtain 8:00pm

All performances at the Highwood Memorial Centre, High River

Presented through arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

To Purchase Tickets
(Dinner Theatre & Regular Theatre)

Contact: Celia
Tel: 403-652-7913
Email: wtp@shaw.ca

www.windmilltheatreplayers.com



H.R. TIMES, MAR. 13, '09

